

## Sample Lesson – Responding to Text

### Character Analysis Lesson 1: Whole-Class/Direct Instruction

Grades K–4

#### *Princess Penelope’s Parrot*, by Helen Lester

This book can be used grades K–4. All levels of students will enjoy the story and will be able to identify character traits. Lesson one mirrors the Painted Essay™ explained in Exemplars *Writing Is Elementary: Teaching Young Children to Write*.



**Note:** In the beginning, we recommend these lessons be taught over a period of several days. This enables students to take their time and become familiar with each step of the writing process.

Once students have mastered the *Developing Writers* technique, the first steps of the lessons can be condensed into fewer sessions, rather than extended.

The initial time invested allows students to fully grasp key concepts and fundamental building blocks, making them more effective writers in the long run.

Scaffolding Skills Students Need to Know Have I taught these yet? Do I need to teach or review?
• Qualities of good writing – purpose, organization, voice, detail/ elaboration
• Response qualities – references to text, citations
• Difference between character analysis and physical description
• Sandwich paragraphs (if appropriate)
• Introductions – context and focus
• Conclusions – “aha” conclusion
• Retelling/Summary/Analysis

Scaffolding of Lesson	
Day 1	<p>Prepare students to read <i>Princess Penelope’s Parrot</i>, by Helen Lester. Explain any needed vocabulary and then read the story for students to enjoy. Ask basic understanding, inferential and connection questions.</p> <p><b>Example:</b>  <b>Basic Understanding</b> – What kind of gifts did Penelope get on her birthday?  <b>Inferential</b> – Why does Penelope want to marry the prince?  <b>Connection</b> – How is her birthday different from yours?</p> <p>Have students orally retell the story.</p>



Practice Page 1  
on page 27.



Figure 5 on  
page 28.

<p><b>Day 2</b></p>	<p>Reread the story. Put Practice Page 1 (page 27) on an overhead or large chart paper. Have the class summarize the story by filling in the Practice Page as a class. For younger students this can be done as a whole-class lesson or orally.</p>
<p><b>Day 3</b></p>	<p>Explain to students that today they are going to analyze the character of Penelope. Have them brainstorm adjectives that describe Penelope. Put these on chart paper. Pick two. (Ex: Penelope is spoiled and mean.)</p> <p>Ask students to find examples in the book that show she is spoiled (or whatever the first adjective is). Write down examples. Do the same for the second adjective.</p> <p>(See Figure 5, Penelope’s Traits, page 28.)</p>
<p><b>Day 4</b></p>	<p>Write the introduction as a whole class. Use a red marker to write the context, explaining that this is the context (the background information readers need to know), and write the word “context” in the left margin next to the context.</p> <p>Give them the focus, using the word “focus” as you write it in black and color it over with yellow. Explain that this is a two-part focus, and the second part of the focus is colored blue.</p> <p><b>Example:</b></p> <p><b>Context:</b> <i>Princess Penelope’s Parrot, by Helen Lester, is a book about a young princess who wants to marry a prince. She is very spoiled and bad-tempered.</i></p> <p><b>Focus:</b> <i>bad-tempered.</i></p>

<p>Day 5</p>	<p>Read the introduction written on day four as a review of the parts of an introduction: context and focus. Explain to the students that today they are going to write the first paragraph in the body of the paper. The body of this paper is going to be two paragraphs in the order of the focus: 1. spoiled and 2. bad-tempered. Today’s paragraph will be about how Penelope is spoiled.</p> <p>Bring out the students’ brainstorming chart and go over the references to text that students brainstormed on day three about Penelope being spoiled. Ask if they want to add any other examples.</p> <p>Draw a large sandwich on a new piece of yellow chart paper. Even if you have already taught students the sandwich paragraph, repeat the parts of the paragraph: A, the top piece of bread, is the topic sentence that always tells what the paragraph is about; B, the filling, gives examples to prove the topic sentence; and C, the bottom bun, is a comment on the information you have given them.</p> <p><i>Example:</i></p> <p>Penelope is very spoiled. She is spoiled rotten. Her dresses are not just ordinary dresses, but ones with “ruffles on its ruffles on its ruffles.” Her gifts are not what an ordinary kid would get. They are better. She gets jeweled roller blades, a sixteen wheeler, a bathing suit with rare peacock feathers. Even her cake is better than most birthday cakes. It is seven layers high with a golden cage and real bird on it. She is so spoiled she gets whatever she wants.</p>
<p>Day 6</p>	<p>Reread the introduction and first body paragraph. Edit and revise with students, thinking aloud so students see and hear the process.</p> <p>Write the second paragraph based on the second part of the focus (Penelope is bad-tempered) in the same sandwich format used for the first body paragraph. Write this paragraph in blue to match the second part of the focus. (See Figure 6, page 29.)</p>



Figure 6 on page 29.

<p><b>Day 7</b></p>	<p>Reread the work done on days four through six. Do a “think aloud” revision, making changes with student input.</p> <p>Write the conclusion. Explain that a conclusion has two parts: the restatement of the focus and the “aha.” Write the restatement in green. Go back to their summary and talk about the big ideas they came up with. Use one or two of these as an “aha” conclusion.</p> <p><i>Example:</i></p> <p>Focus      <u>Penelope wasn't very nice. She was spoiled rotten and always in a bad mood.</u> Because of this the prince doesn't like her, and they don't get married. She needs to learn how important it is to be kind and think of others.</p>
<p><b>Days 8, 9, etc.</b></p>	<p>Read their work, always using the writing terms.</p> <p><i>Example:</i></p> <p>“Let's read the context and the focus.” Type the piece and distribute so that each student can practice reading it, take it home for parents to read, etc.</p>

# Practice Page 1 – Character Analysis

## Story Summary

Title and author of book \_\_\_\_\_

Focus of book \_\_\_\_\_

Three or four major events

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The big idea / point of the story

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Now write the information in a paragraph

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## Princess Penelope's Parrot

Spoiled  
 selfish  
 mean  
 bratty  
 demanding  
 haughty  
 self-absorbed  
 never proud of what she gets

Greedy  
rude

<p>spoiled</p> <p>birthday gifts</p> <p>a) bathing suit</p> <p>b) roller blades</p> <p>c) 16-wheeler trike</p> <p>late-7 lever skateboard</p>	<p><del>spoiled</del></p> <p>"mine-mine-mine"</p> <p>"gimme"</p> <p>marry the prince because he was rich rich RICH</p>	<p>bad / <del>tempered</del> <u>tempered</u></p> <p>she talk + chain parrot disrespectful to bird</p> <p>"bird brain buzzard"</p> <p>"I'll pluck + feathers off you."</p>
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Figure 5: Princess Penelope's Traits

she doesn't care what she says or what she  
does she just does it. <sup>Penelope</sup> ~~she~~ is always bad  
tempered. She put a ball and  
chain on the parrot, <sup>and</sup> ~~she~~ says to him  
talk big beak! ... <sup>Speak or</sup> I will ratal your cage."  
She also says "get lost ~~my~~ you "not heid."  
Finally she <sup>says</sup> ~~Penelope~~ ~~says~~ "look  
birdbrain I'm about ready to pluck  
your feathers out one by one."  
~~Penelope~~ <sup>That Princess</sup> ~~she~~ IS VERY NICE.

Figure 6: Sandwich Paragraph